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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PBTS](#) [PHUM](#) [WI](#) [MO](#) [AG](#)  
SUBJECT: MFA SECRETARY GENERAL SAYS CREATIVE SOLUTION  
NEEDED ON WESTERN SAHARA

Classified By: CDA, a.i. Thomas F. Daughton for reasons 1.4 b, d.

¶1. (C) In a December 4 meeting devoted to several issues, the Ambassador reviewed for MFA Secretary General Ramtane Lamamra U.S. views on the Western Sahara. The Ambassador noted that Washington would look favorably on a serious Moroccan autonomy proposal for the disputed area, provided that it had Sahrawi support. He stressed that we had made clear to the Moroccans the need for dialogue between the GOM and Polisario on any Moroccan proposal and said that the U.S. continued to support the Sahrawi right to self-determination. The Ambassador asked Lamamra for current GOA thinking on the Western Sahara, in particular its views on a Sahrawi expression of self-determination.

¶2. (C) Lamamra asserted that while Morocco had played a positive role on some issues in the wider region, it would be a mistake to reward it, as the occupying power, for its intransigence on the dispute in the Western Sahara. Resolving the Western Sahara dispute was not a war of attrition in Algeria's view, and it was important that Morocco act in accordance with international law to dispel doubts about its motives and build confidence in the Maghreb. Lamamra underscored that Morocco and the Polisario could not be expected to achieve what skilled UN negotiators had not accomplished over many years. Fair mediation was needed in addressing the genuine concerns of all parties.

¶3. (C) The Ambassador pushed Lamamra to be more specific as to what self-determination mechanism might be acceptable. In response, Lamamra offered Andorra as an example of how creative diplomacy by Spain and France, two governments with important interests in North Africa, could create a win-win solution. Lamamra said to his knowledge Andorra had two heads of state: the French president and a Spanish archbishop. The creative diplomacy between France and Spain that created the Andorran solution could surely be employed, in conjunction with other parties, in the Western Sahara. Lamamra cautioned that Morocco's "swallowing" the territory whole would create problems in the Maghreb for years to come. Creativity was needed. Self-determination in the Algerian view required the endorsement of the Sahrawi people. Lamamra observed that the endorsement could take two forms. In one, the Sahrawis would vote on a series of choices presented to them in a referendum. In the other, the Sahrawis would endorse by referendum an agreement between two parties.

¶4. (C) Noting that any lasting solution would likely fall somewhere between Sahrawi independence and integration into Morocco, the Ambassador asked if the UNSYG's personal envoy might help to formulate a solution involving some form of autonomy. Lamamra responded that in Algeria's view the personal envoy had not taken the right approach. While Algeria believed that autonomy could not substitute for the right to self-determination, autonomy could be a component of self-determination. Lamamra doubted the Polisario would embrace a Moroccan autonomy proposal that deprived the Sahrawis of their right to self-determination. He stressed the need for a creative solution, citing Andorra again as an example of agile diplomacy. Any such solution would have to be acceptable to the Sahrawis and be consistent with UN obligations in ensuring that the Sahrawis' rights were respected. Any solution that lacked the buy-in of the Sahrawis would not succeed, he opined, and would likely lead to renewed violence.

¶5. (C) Comment: Lamamra was more forward-leaning early in the discussion, but became more cautious as it proceeded. His emphasis on the merits of an Andorra-type solution nonetheless suggests that a creative Moroccan autonomy proposal, if presented to the Sahrawis for their endorsement by referendum after acceptance of it by the Polisario, would be acceptable to Algeria. Lamamra also implied that Algeria would be willing to take tangible steps toward greater Maghreb cooperation -- such as opening its border with Morocco -- if Morocco cut an acceptable deal with the Polisario on the Western Sahara.

DAUGHTON